



☒ Executive Committee ☐ District Leadership Council ☐ Annual Meeting

**Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Meeting Minutes**

ORDER OF BUSINESS	12/03/2019	3:30 PM	Conference Call
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by	Larry Bonde at 3:33 PM
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Bonde, Blattler, Maas, Weiss, Roehrig and Kari Lee Zimmermann WCC, Liaison.
EXCUSED	
UNEXCUSED	
GUESTS	Trent Tonn, Rob Bohmann, Tom Meronek, Mark Walters, Todd Kalish and Adam Nickel,

C. Agenda Approval and Repair

Bonde

DISCUSSION	Larry stated that he had no changes to the agenda as published other than possibly shuffling presentations to accommodate staff and guests so they can get on with their day. Secretaries note: the minutes of this meeting are in agenda order, but may have been addressed out of order due to the above motion.
ACTION	Motion by Blattler second by Roehrig to approve as stated. Motion carried.

D. Public Comments

Bonde

DISCUSSION	After discussion there was no public comments at this time.
ACTION	No action taken.

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Review of Natural Resources Board December 10-11, 2019, Agenda

Zimmermann

DISCUSSION	<p>Reviewed Ruffed Grouse management plan and discussed by Mark Waters, Wildlife Manager. He stated that the plan had gone out for public review and a four-week comment.. They received 58 comments. The two areas of contention were adjusting the zones, and the second being shortening the season. The zone adjustment received very little feedback and those comments were positive. The more contentious issue was the shortening of the season to (the closest Sunday to January 5) they had a survey of 2,700 hunters of which approximately 70% responded to the survey and those that responded 67% of them supported the shorter season format as proposed. From the four listening sessions 26 people opposed the shorter season 10 supported it. The Ruffed Grouse committee supported the plan along with continuing to monitor West Nile virus with the help of our partners including the Ruffed Grouse Society.</p> <p>We will continue adjusting our focus on Ruffed Grouse habitat and best management plans to enhance Ruffed Grouse. The department will also be looking at ways to enhance the assistance of citizen scientists to better utilize fuel data. The study also mentioned and we will work to diligently understand the economic impact of grouse hunting in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is known as a destination for grouse hunters from many other states. Intend to use this information to leverage the economic importance to Wisconsin as we strive to better understand all facets of Ruffed Grouse.</p> <p>Motion by Maas second by Weiss to support plan as proposed.</p> <p>Discussion by Blattler; he stated that he did have a conversation with Mike Riggle and that while there were other areas of contention that they thought could be improved upon this was a good working document and allowed for some flexibility. One of the concerns was involving the public participation in brood surveys and how that would possibly interact with existing data that's there but in general they thought was a step in the right direction.</p> <p>Motion carried.</p> <p>Winnebago Walleye Management Plan was presented by Adam Nichols, Fisheries Biologist. Kari mentioned that in the past Dick Koerner represented the WCC on this committee, but since his passing representation has been spotty and that the Congress should establish a stronger delegate position.</p> <p>Adam stated that in 1990 there was a working group to establish goals and managing walleyes on the Winnebago system, again in 2010 there were public meetings held at over harvest was one of the top ranking issues of people that showed up to the meetings. The next ranking issue was over harvest on the spring run followed by vegetation and water quality. They started by using the issues from the 2010 meetings to draft and take another look at the management system. In 2013 they began meeting with the Winnebago Advisory Council and worked with them to come up with a new draft.</p>
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	<p>In 2018 they held three public meetings; Oshkosh, Chilton and New London. At that time we also discussed the walleye regulation proposed changes which drew many additional comments but the overall plan was supported at those three meetings. The walleye regulation change (three fish 18 inches) was approved statewide at the last spring hearing and also past on many counties in the Winnebago system. That change is waiting for the governor's signature and potentially be in acted by April 1, 2020.</p> <p>This new plan focuses on for major issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Winnebago species management. 2. Over harvest. 3. Habitat and continuing enhancement of walleye spawning marshes. 4. Social and user conflict. <p>Maas asked if there was any consideration to have a sunset clause in the proposed rate change. The feedback that he's getting from Mike Arrowood (Walleyes for Tomorrow) and many others in District 7 that they would like to see a change but they would also like to have an opportunity to revisit that change knowing the length of time and the amount of effort it takes should a permanent rule go into effect.</p> <p>The department has been looking at the exploitation levels of immature females in the last data that they are put together a showing 48% of the immature females on a system are being harvested. Mike has brought up forage base concerns but his intent is not to put it into effect and sit on it for 20 years but to monitor this going forward. One of the reasons that we are recommending this bag change is that we don't want to get into a position where we have to ask for an emergency rule change. This is a management plan for the overall health of the Winnebago system and is not just a walleye regulation plan.</p> <p>After discussion there was a motion by Maas second by Blattler to support the plan. Motion carried.</p> <p>Trawling for whitefish on Lake Michigan was presented by Tom Meronek</p> <p>Tom gave an overview on the proposed adoption of board order FH-10-15. This would allow for a five year trial. For trawling for whitefish in a designated area off of Manitowoc. Dale stated this was brought up many times over the course of the last couple of years while a preliminary study was being done. The commercial fishing industry in the area was having difficulty in successfully harvesting their targeted species and was lobbying for an alternate method. A five-year extensive study plan was put together and then reported on at various meetings up and down the lake. The biggest concern by the sports fisherman was incidental catch of game fish and many of the commercial fisherman had issue with trawl times having to do with release of under size whitefish.</p> <p>Tom stated that the rule had identified trawling times, net mesh size, and guidelines and requirements for non-targeted species. Motion by Maas, second by Weiss to support the proposal. Motion carried.</p> <p>Todd Kalish presented the proposal on Lake Superior tribal negotiations\commercial fisheries. None of these proposals directly involved the sports fisherman. There were some concerns about a commercial whitefish quota that was offered but to assure that the catch did not include Lake Trout those that would participate needed to have available Lake Trout tags in order to participate in the whitefish fishery.</p> <p>Todd mentioned that as recently as three weeks ago they had a discussion with the warden staff assigned to that area and had asked if there was any new or additional conflicts between sports fisherman and the tribes\commercial fishermen. They had stated that there were no additional issues with the whitefish commercial harvest or the sports fisherman in the area. Since this was not negotiated between the tribes and the state this was considered information only.</p> <p>The WCC takes no position.</p> <p>The issue of night hunting for raccoons during deer hunting is on the board agenda. Since the WCC has a position of support there was a motion by Blattler second by Maas for a letter to be drafted in support to be sent to the Natural Resources Board. Motion carried.</p> <p>The black bear management plan was being presented to the board for approval. Motion by Maas second by Weiss to support the plan based on the WCC position. Motion carried.</p>	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

B. Purchase of E-Xcel Energy parcels-Lower Chippewa River

Terri Roehrig

DISCUSSION	<p>Terri stated that the Natural Resources Committee had rejected a proposal of the purchase of the property on the Lower Chippewa River. The local conservation groups the Buffalo County Conservation Alliance and many other organizations have asked that the Natural Resources Committee reconsider this proposal. \$700,000 of stewardship money along with a 50% match by NAWCAW was available.</p>	
ACTION	<p>Motion by Roehrig second by Blattler that Larry send a letter to the Natural Resource Committee asking that they revisit this issue. Motion carried.</p>	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

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C. WCC administrative housekeeping

Zimmermann

DISCUSSION	Kari stated that the agenda for the upcoming DLC meeting is being drafted and that a new position was posted to replace Mike Schmit who took another assignment (this will be a LTE position).	
ACTION	Information Only. No action taken.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

Review request from YCC Oversight Committee to use OHEC donation for YCC logo

Roehrig

D. design

DISCUSSION	Terri stated that OHEC had donated \$200 to the Friends of WCC to be used to develop a logo for the Youth Conservation Congress. Rob Bowmann chair the friends group stated his support. His understanding was that the \$200 would be given to a development group who would print then present graphic designs by a number of designers for the YCC to review. There was the discussion on whether the YCC oversight committee would have final approval.	
ACTION	There was a motion by Blattler second by Roehrig to authorize the proposal and that the WCC oversight submit possible approved logos at the next District Leadership Council meeting for final approval. Motion carried.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Weiss, none. Blattler, commented on additional thoughts on the Ruffed Grouse Management Plan and his thoughts on possible lead changing the daily bag limit from 5 to 3. Maas, he reminded that he would not be able to attend the January 2020 DLC committee meeting and that they needed to appoint somebody to take minutes, he suggested contacting Paul Gettelman from Green Lake County. He also asked direction on how we should handle this solicitation for advertising for the educational trailer. He has sent out information to one vendor but was notified that they would not make a decision until after the first of the year and that there was no guarantee that there was going to be a commitment. The discussion was to send it out to more potential donors and it would be a first come first serve on who came up with the amount. Roehrig, none. Zimmermann, none.
ACTION	There being no further business a motion by Maas second by Roehrig to adjourn. Motion carried.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	4:58 PM
SUBMITTED BY	Dale C. Maas
DATE	12/13/2019